Reviewer’s report

Title: "I need somebody who knows about feet" a qualitative study investigating the lived experiences of conservative treatment for patients with Posterior Tibial Tendon Dysfunction.

Version: 0 Date: 11 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Megan Ross

Reviewer's report:

Comments:

1. Thank you for the opportunity to review this qualitative paper exploring the lived experiences of conservative management for patients with PTTD. I found this study to be of importance to the field, although I feel that the sampling approach may have led to an unrepresentative sample of participants, which is confounded by the small sample size. I think that some general changes to the manuscript, potentially including the title, need to be made to flag that these participants were recruited from a podiatry clinic and that these experiences may not be representative of all patients living with PTTD.

2. Some general comments: ensure headings are consistent with JFAR formatting guidelines, consistency with spacing before references and consistency with use of ’ or " for your participant quotes.

Abstract:

3. Line 51: *Posterior tibial tendon dysfunction (PTTD)* - each word does not need to be capitalised

4. Line 67: change *research* to *study*

Introduction

5. Line 94: change conditions that *effect* muscles to *affect* muscles

6. Line 96: provide a citation for your statement here

7. Line 98: change *worse* to *worst* impact

8. Line 99 and 102: missing a space between the final word in the sentence and the reference [

9. Line 103: stay *in* or return to work

10. Line 109: often *be* poorly recognised
11. Line 110: Remove *nonetheless* as this sentence is quite separate from your previous. Consider re-wording the sentence to something like: *The condition can also occur in other populations…*

12. Lines 115 to 121: Have you read Reported selection criteria for adult acquired flatfoot deformity and posterior tibial tendon dysfunction: Are they one and the same? A systematic review. ? This paper detail some of the issues that you mention in this paragraph

13. Lines 123 to 130: There is a systematic review on conservative management for PTTD that despite the small number of studies, shows moderate effects for improving pain and disability with local exercise

14. Line 126: I am not sure that patient reported outcomes specifically for quality of life are used extensively in this body of work. Most PROMs used in this literature are function based, which is different to quality of life (although not necessarily separate from). Consider removing this sentence or re-wording to reflect the literature (and provide references).

15. Line 129: You need to detail, or provide examples of how there are contrasting results.

16. Line 143: Add space between *life* and the bracket for the reference

17. Line 146: Remove the apostrophe from *patients*

Methods

18. Line 167: change PTTD *in* to *and* aged between 18-80 years

19. Line 166: The heading *Participants* should be above the paragraph starting on line 167 that describes eligibility criteria.

20. Line 168: It would be good if you could detail the specific diagnostic criteria used to confirm diagnosis; clinical tests that were positive/negative, and also who made the clinical diagnosis and who performed the imaging. This will add rigor to your study.


22. Table 1: Instead of the * and ** for US and MRI, include a row at the bottom of your table with *Abbreviations: US; ultrasound imaging, MRI; magnetic resonance imaging

23. Line 192: Need to write *MSc* in full

24. Line 218: Add a space between *data* and the bracket of the reference

25. Line 224: add a space between *analysis* and the bracket of the reference
26. Line 235: This heading seems out of place, as you already have a heading for *Results* - perhaps it is best to change the heading in line 230 to *Results and Discussion* and then remove the heading from line 237, leaving only the subheading *Patient journal and inappropriate referral*

27. Line 245: Check the inverted commas for the quote (the first one is facing the wrong way). Also check the use of single (') or double (") as this is inconsistent throughout the manuscript

28. Line 263: Consider providing references for each separate point in your first sentence of this paragraph, as there are quite a few different points in this sentence.

29. Line 266: add a space between *podiatry* and the bracket of the reference

30. Line 326: You need to write *PTT* out in full as you have not defined this acronym - and it would be good to provide a reference for the statement about tissue stress

31. Line 329: add an apostrophe to the end of *participants* so that it is *participants' discourse*

32. Line 453: remove the apostrophe from *patient's* so that it is *patients*

33. Line 456: remove *u* after recommending

34. Line 457: Consider re-wording this - you are taking about ultrasound imaging to confirm the diagnosis of PTTD? You state that US should be the gold standard in the *treatment* of PTTD?

35. Line 463: *(i.e.: ..)* should be (i.e. …)*

36. Line 464: add space between *concept* and bracket of the reference

37. Line 469: *Qualitative* should be *quantitative* - and I don't think these studies have 'proven' that bracing is beneficial, these studies are cohort studies, not randomised clinical trials. Consider re-wording to these studies *suggest that bracing may be beneficial for PTTD…*

38. Line 470: Consider re-wording to: *Despite reported improvements in function and pain, self-reported outcomes did not improve in one study [45]* (if it was only the one study [45] that did not show an improvement in PROMs despite improvements in functional outcomes)

39. Line 474 and line 485 and line 509: change *FO* to *FOs*

40. Line 537: check consistency of the use of inverted commas/quotation marks

41. Line 544: check consistency of square brackets for references
References

42. Please format the references to the correct JFAR style. Some issues include:

a) only have commas between author names

b) be consistent with journal names

c) all references need the correct abbreviated journal name (use the following website to obtain correct journal abbreviations: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/journals)

d) remove the p before page numbers

e) provide the full page number range e.g. reference 8 and be consistent with page numbering e.g. reference 16 compared to reference 17 and 18

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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